

Aviation Business Lab – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Aviation Business Lab?

The Aviation Business Lab is a six-week, academy-style program designed to help small businesses understand how to successfully operate in the airport concessions marketplace. Through guided instruction, interactive sessions, and industry insights, participants gain the knowledge and tools needed to pursue opportunities at our airports.

Who is this program for?

The program is designed for small businesses that are new to the airport concessions environment. Whether you're exploring the aviation marketplace for the first time or looking to understand how to position your business for future opportunities, this program is built for you.

What is considered a small business?

The City of Phoenix defines small business firms as those that meet all of the following criteria:

- Independent and for-profit business concerns
- Owned and controlled by one or more persons
- Personal Net Worth (PNW) of each owner cannot exceed \$2.047M
- Annual Gross Sales, averaged over the past five years, cannot exceed \$56.42M

Do I need to be located in Phoenix or Arizona to apply?

No. Businesses do not have to be local to Phoenix or Arizona to participate. However, all applicants must be able to commit to the program's attendance policy, including required in-person sessions.

What topics will the program cover?

Over six weeks, participating businesses will take part in weekly sessions such as:

- Welcome Orientation & Certification Basics
- Understanding & Preparing for Prime Partnerships
- Access to Capital & Financial Resources
(Collaboration with the AZHCC's Capital Readiness Program)
- Aviation Procurement Process & Airport Tour
- Operational Readiness & Insight from Concessionaires
- Program Graduation including Fast Pitch

When does the program take place?

The Aviation Business Lab runs for six weeks from August 26 - September 30, 2026, with weekly sessions held on Wednesdays from 5 – 7 p.m. Participants are expected to attend all six scheduled classes. Missing more than one class may result from removal from the program or ineligibility to graduate.

Is there a cost to participate?

Participation in the Aviation Business Lab is free.

What are the eligibility requirements?

To apply, businesses must:

- Meet small business size standards
- Be new to the airport concessions environment
- Demonstrate interest in future airport opportunities
- Commit to program attendance policy
- Meet any additional criteria outlined in the application

How many businesses will be accepted?

Enrollment is limited to ensure a high-quality learning experience. Cohort size will be limited to 10-15 businesses. Early application is strongly encouraged.

How many representatives can attend per business?

Each business may designate one representative to attend the Aviation Business Lab. This representative must have decision-making authority within the company and access to the business's financial information. Examples of eligible representatives include Owner, CEO, Manager, Director, or another individual who meets the requirements above. This ensures that the participant can fully engage with program content, make informed decisions, and accurately represent the business during discussions, exercises, and the Fast Pitch session.

How do I apply?

Applications are open from July 13 – July 31, 2026. Eligible businesses can apply through our online application portal. Please view the Aviation Business Lab portal here: [Aviation Business Lab | Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport](#)

What happens after I complete the program?

Graduates will leave with a clearer understanding of how to do business at our airports, along with tools, connections, and next steps for pursuing future opportunities. Additional support or follow-up activities may be announced after program completion.

Disclaimer: Participation in this program is not required to do business at our airports. In addition, participation does not guarantee the award of a contract or business partnership at our airports.

Who can I contact with additional questions?

For more information, please reach out to busopps.aviation@phoenix.gov or call (602) 273-3390